

**ADDRESS TO BE DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF GEORGE BIZOS' 80<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY  
BY PETER STATHOULIS**

**HELD AT THE SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE  
ON 12 NOVEMBER 2008**

Honoured guests, members of the Bizos family and friends.

We are truly grateful that we are able to gather this evening as relatives and friends, to join the entire Bizos family in celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of a wonderful, brave and philanthropic personality - George Bizos.

One who can not do enough for society. A person with so many philanthropic goals and principles. He sacrificed much to help the South African Nation achieve one of its greatest dreams – the advent of democracy, freedom and equality for all. Non discrimination, irrespective of race, colour or creed has been one of his main principles for which he has stood and fought throughout in our legal courts and in his everyday life.

We read and hear much about George Bizos regarding his activity as legal representative for the suppressed in South Africa and in other parts of the world.

In 1967 amongst his many humane goals, he also set himself the goal and dream of having an Hellenic School established in South Africa in order to enrich our South African society with the Hellenic civilisation and culture. He wished to share Hellenism with all.

**He is noted for saying : “The spirit of Hellenism belongs to all. We have a duty to nurture it.”**

A man who loves and serves both his countries. Mr Bizos an Hellene by birth, set out in his beloved adopted country, to give Hellenism its rightful position in South Africa. Under his chairmanship the SAHETI School was planned and built just over 40 years ago to reach the status it enjoys today.

It was his foresight, determination and leadership that a dream for all Hellenes in South Africa materialised. This wonderful and well planned School known as SAHETI was developed. His goal, desire, wish and outlook for Hellenism in South Africa materialised. Planning was reasonably easy to achieve. The renowned Professor Fassler did the master plan of the School. Thereafter the engagement and appointment of the remaining professionals and building team took place.

As one who was involved with him from the outset, the stress and hardships encountered in having the School financed and functioning at the initial stages needs special mention. It is here that I really got to admire George Bizos for his unrelenting determination and leadership to see this project through to finality. “We don’t program defeat”, he would always say when our “Fund Raising Committee” could not meet the target of required funds. Under his guidance we overcame all the financial obstacles and as a result we now have this wonderful School.

Ladies and Gentlemen, information brochures have been handed out detailing aspects of the Fund. Allow me however, to once again expound on its aims and goals, as well as achievements till date.

A good education is a foundation sought by all. In particular we recognise that a quality primary and secondary education prepares our youth for a tertiary education. The SAHETI School has had a very positive feedback from tertiary institutions about our SAHETI graduates. With the view to make the SAHETI education available to talented and needy children, he proposed and established the George Bizos SAHETI Scholarship and Bursary Fund in 2003. This Fund is utilised to educate talented and needy children who could be our future leaders and who wish to attend the School, irrespective of their race, colour or creed.

The School does not practise proselytism. As a result it has children from no less than 26 different ethnicities attending the School. Their cultures, religions and creeds are respected, but at the same time the Hellenic spirit and culture has found its rightful place in their education and life. It should be mentioned that right from the outset the School enrolled previously disadvantaged children.

We are grateful to all those who made this Fund a reality. I would be failing if I did not mention the names of those who assisted in placing the Fund on a solid foundation.

Princess Irene, was one of the very first to have contributed to the Fund.

However, it was as a result of the enthusiasm and willingness to be of assistance, that our Ambassador for Greece, His Excellency Mr Sandis set the ball rolling. He started by hosting a dinner with his good lady, Mrs Sandis at his residence on 23 November 2006 where official fund collecting was launched. Not only did he host the dinner, but had arranged for the Hellenic Government to make its first contribution of R300,000 towards the Fund. He showed himself to be a true patron of SAHETI.

An initial amount of approximately R5 million was donated and pledged on this occasion and immediately thereafter. The initial contributors who attended the dinner were : Messrs S Bylos, L Pouroulis, C Cavaleros, T Christoforou, M Deftereos, Dr C Stephanou, G Yiannoulis, Mr and Mrs S Georgopoulos, Zotos Brothers. Subsequently, Intralot South Africa (represented by Mr Yannis Rondiris and Mr Antonis Katsaounis) made a substantial pledge. Our SAHETI Ladies Committee continues to make an annual contribution. Please forgive me if I have omitted to mention any names of those who have given. However, all donors have been acknowledged and their participation and contributions are treasured.

At this stage I wish to thank former President Mandela for making available a copy of his Rivonia Trial Speech personally certified by him. He has also autographed the leather bound copy of his book "On The Road To Freedom". The original Cartoon kindly donated by the well known cartoonist Zapiro, has also been signed by former President Mandela.

A thank you to Mrs Chrysoula Argyros, the artist who has donated a portrait of Mr Bizos. All these items will be auctioned later this evening and the proceeds will obviously go towards the Fund.

Remember ladies and gentlemen, all of you attending this evening are not only joining the Bizos family to make this a memorable evening and birthday celebration, but at the same time you are all assisting in fulfilling his unselfish wish and dream to educate needy and worthy children. His wish that the proceeds of this evening go towards the Fund is very much admired.

It costs approximately R50,000 per annum to educate a child at the school. Donors who wish to secure the naming of a scholarship per year in perpetuity can contribute an amount of R500,000 over a period of 5 years.

**Remember that your contribution, whether personal or through your business is tax deductible, as SAHETI is a registered "Public Benefit Organisation".**

I will be proposing to the Board that the funds collected as a result of this Gala Dinner to be earmarked as the **"George Bizos 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Scholarship and Bursary Contribution"**. This is to be invested to allow the proceeds to provide an income on a continuous basis towards the George Bizos SAHETI Scholarship and Bursary Fund.

The marketing department will be requested to structure and record the details in such a manner in the School's archives and that of the Fund so that there will be a permanent record of all who have attended and participated this evening.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please forgive me for making one more approach to raise funds this evening. It is not an easy task asking and collecting funds from time to time and especially this evening where everybody here has already participated and contributed. However perhaps there are some who would still like to make a further contribution.

In order to facilitate and make it as easy as possible, a form will be provided in which you will enter your contact details and if you wish to pledge any further monies towards the Fund, to indicate this on the form. I beg you however, irrespective of whether you make a further contribution or not, to please ensure that you complete the form so that we have a proper record of all present this evening to enable us to correctly record your names in our archives.

The forms will be collected later on this evening, immediately after Mr Bizos' speech.

LET US GIVE MR BIZOS AN UNFORGETTABLE BIRTHDAY PRESENT. LET US SHOW HIM THAT WE SHARE HIS WISH TO ASSIST OUR WORTHY AND NEEDY SOUTH AFRICAN CHILDREN WHO WISH TO BE EDUCATED AT SAHETI.

I thank you, one and all, for your participation and support and for joining us this evening to celebrate George Bizos' birthday. George, we all wish you well and good health.

Thank you.

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